

UNICEF's Inputs to the Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway

June 2024

UNICEF's 2024 inputs draw on inputs provided by UNICEF Regional and Country Offices, as well as UNICEF's Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Position Paper. The Position Paper, released in 2024 and found [here](#), explores the unique vulnerabilities of children in SIDS. The Paper also highlights the impacts of poverty, disasters, and a changing climate on children's well-being.

PART A - REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING IN SIDS

1. Enhanced Support for achieving Resilient Prosperity in SIDS

The theme for the SIDS4 Conference is “Charting a Course toward Resilient Prosperity” as such resilience building will be at the core of the new Programme of Action for SIDS. Briefly elaborate on any resilience building interventions or strategies (proactive or preventative) that will be implemented at national or regional levels aimed specifically at improving resilience in SIDS. Please include indications of resource allocations, if available. (750 words)

UNICEF is actively engaged in supporting SIDS, focusing on enhancing resilience, ensuring access to essential services, promoting child protection, and facilitating youth engagement. Strategies include: ensuring that services across education, health, social protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) remain operational during and after disasters by building in shock-resilience, preparedness and crisis-response management; ensuring children's nutritional needs by promoting climate-resilient food systems, healthy diets, and regulation of ultra-processed foods; and building resilient systems.¹

UNICEF's Eastern Caribbean Area (ECA) Office supports investing in strengthening agile and resilient education systems through the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI), and provision of training to 1,400 teachers, school administrators, parents, and education stakeholders. In Belize, UNICEF is partnering directly with Galen University to develop various curricula, covering the regional protocol of the integrated approach for children and adolescents in emergency and disaster situations. A graduate programme on Disaster Risk Management is also under development – the first of its kind in the Caribbean subregion.

¹ UNICEF SIDS Position Paper, 2024

<https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/media/4481/file/UNICEF%20Position%20Paper%20for%20SIDS4%20FINAL.pdf.pdf>

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UNICEF Belize and UNICEF's Multi-Country Office in the Pacific are among the many offices working to ensure access to climate resilient water, sanitation and hygiene systems, and promotion of energy efficient and uninterrupted access to healthcare systems. In the Pacific, this is through the solarization of healthcare facilities and supporting investments in Green, Safe, and Climate-Resilient Schools. In Guyana, Suriname, and São Tomé and Príncipe, UNICEF has supported a climate resilient cold chain that can address immediate healthcare needs and serve as a long-term asset for the public health infrastructure.

UNICEF also supports strengthening of schools for emergency preparedness, ensuring climate resilience, disaster risk management, and digital learning solutions are incorporated in sector and school planning. UNICEF is prioritizing these interventions in countries such as Papua New Guinea (with current resources of US\$ 3.19 million), and Belize, where key infrastructure (including education facilities) has been assessed for climate proofing, ensuring that backup water catchment systems are established in villages so that the schools are fully functional in times of disaster. In Comoros, UNICEF is embarking on creating water harvesting structures to address water scarcity in the long run, and climate-smart social services and infrastructure.

Engaging youth for meaningful youth empowerment and participation

Youth participation is a key approach for UNICEF in advancing the resilience agenda. Targeted investment in youth is key to tapping into the potential of young people by investing strategically in health, education, employment retention and empowerment that enables the contribution of this important demographic to decision-making. Equally essential is opening opportunities to develop and implement innovative, solution-oriented actions based on their ideas and informed knowledge. ²

UNICEF's ECA Office trained 34 youths to execute sustained advocacy campaigns. National student councils in Antigua and Barbuda, as well as Barbados were also established, and the Youth Parliament in Barbados was supported to achieve at least 50 per cent of members being under 18. UNICEF ECA, in collaboration with the Department of Youth of Saint Kitts and Nevis, facilitated the development of a National Youth Engagement Strategy on Climate Action (YES-CA), which will be completed in 2024.

In Cabo Verde, UNICEF mobilized 1,000 young people at national level to participate in the design and implementation of public policies with an environmental impact. UNICEF in São Tomé and Príncipe also engaged in dialogue with youth through the U-report platform. In total, 12,500 youth (around 20% of the country's adolescents) were engaged in resilience-building discussions to enhance community responses to health and climate-related challenges.

Data and technology

² UNICEF SIDS Position Paper, 2024
<https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/media/4481/file/UNICEF%20Position%20Paper%20for%20SIDS4%20FINAL.pdf>

Using traditional survey methodologies combined with Big Data sources holds immense promise in addressing the multifaceted challenges confronting children and their communities impacted by climate change, as well as informing evidence-based interventions and policies. In Belize, UNICEF is harnessing Geospatial Covariates on Climate and Environment to enrich the analysis of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 7 (MICS7) findings. The MICS7 gathers vital data on child and maternal health, education, WASH, and protection, and integrates Geocoding MICS Data allowing for precise geographical tagging of survey data.

In ECA, UNICEF is developing assessment models in three pilot countries to address data gaps in children's vulnerability to climate and disaster risks (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and Saint Kitts and Nevis) that can be used through a geospatial platform for risk-informed decision making and planning. Producing data is a priority in Cabo Verde as well, where the technical and institutional capacities of the national statistics system were strengthened to produce quality, disaggregated data for the monitoring and evaluation system of the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

2. Enhanced and Tailored Development Cooperation for SIDS

The New SIDS Programme of Action will require improved, tailored development co-operation approaches, calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and economic challenges facing SIDS. Briefly elaborate on any planned or ongoing strategies/approaches to improve and deliver on more tailored development support to SIDS. What are the expected results from these interventions in the targeted countries. Please include indications of resource allocations, if available. (750 words)

UNICEF is focused on accelerating support towards mitigation and adaptation measures that ensure that infrastructure, social services, communities and individuals are climate-responsive and resilient during crises, such as pandemics and natural disasters. With climate and economic resilience heavily entwined in SIDS, UNICEF is supporting the development of climate-resilient, affordable, and safe service delivery models, as well as supporting income and business support programmes. UNICEF is also building shock-responsive, resilient systems and communities by applying multi-hazard risk analysis and linking development, humanitarian and peace-building programme interventions.³

In the ECA, UNICEF has contributed to the shift towards more rights-based, child-focused and shock-responsive social protection policy frameworks in four countries/territories. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission's Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy, developed with the support of UNICEF and ILO, was endorsed by the Council of Ministers of Social Development in April 2023. Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts

³ UNICEF SIDS Position Paper, 2024

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and Nevis effectively used this framework to support the finalization and adoption of their national social protection policies. Improving the enabling environment for social protection reform is expected to positively impact over 185,000 children across the subregion.

SIDS are especially vulnerable to external shocks due to factors such as geographical remoteness, dispersed populations, limited and undiversified economies, exposure to disasters and natural hazards, and the effects of climate change. In such contexts, UNICEF focuses on initiatives such as strengthening social protection coverage, improving government budgets for children, increasing community awareness, and expanding social sector services to mitigate the impact of socio-economic constraints.

In Cabo Verde, the Cooperation Framework is built around the objectives of building better preparedness and resilience against socioeconomic shocks by diversifying the economy and utilizing innovative financing, promoting digitalization and strengthening social protection, education and health systems against environmental hazards. In multiple countries, UNICEF is supporting the strengthening of shock-responsive social protection systems (SRSP) by developing standard operating procedures and guidance for cash transfers in emergencies. Cash transfers to improve resilience are also being explored in Timor-Leste, where UNICEF plans to promote climate-resilient food systems, using nutrition-responsive cash transfer initiatives to combat malnutrition and poverty.

Understanding the specific impacts of climate change on children and young people in SIDS, and how this differs based on intersecting factors such as gender, migration status and disability, is vital. In Cuba, UNICEF has adapted the Child Climate Risk Index-Disaster Risk Model (CCRI-DRM)⁴ assessment methodology to collect evidence at the local level on the impact of climate change among children specifically living in coastal areas of the country. This analysis will inform national decision making and policies on climate change adaptation and mitigation actions.

UNICEF Papua New Guinea's strategy includes a comprehensive approach to natural resource management, climate change mitigation and disaster risk management, all aimed at strengthening local resilience. In addition, UNICEF's strategy is facilitating significant investment in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, while supporting the government to revise Disaster Management Frameworks and strengthen local and national capacities for emergency preparedness and response.

Since 2017, dozens of UNICEF country offices around the globe, including Cabo Verde, ECA, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and soon Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe, have conducted a Climate Landscape Analysis for Children (CLAC).⁵ In São Tomé and Príncipe, for example, advocacy and skills training for climate resilience will involve CLAC and professional training for

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/documents/CCRI-DRM>

⁵ UNICEF SIDS Position Paper, 2024

<https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/media/4481/file/UNICEF%20Position%20Paper%20for%20SIDS4%20FINAL.pdf>

green jobs, in collaboration with UNDP and ILO, supported by African Development Bank funding.

CLACs represent an important milestone in UNICEF's programming cycle, improving the understanding of how climate change impacts children, and facilitating integration of climate change action into strategies and interventions. CLACs also support the mobilization of resources for strengthening child-responsive resilience programmes and climate action.⁶

Resilient and inclusive educational resources that remain operational during and after disasters, including with sufficient water, sanitation and hygiene, is also a priority. Transforming education, including a strong focus on use of new technologies and digital tools is especially urgent in SIDS. In São Tomé and Príncipe, UNICEF collaborates with local authorities to implement digital learning solutions, ensuring educational continuity amid climate disruptions and health crises like COVID-19.⁷ In countries such as Papua New Guinea, UNICEF is focusing on foundational literacy and numeracy, as well as transferable, green and digital skills, so that girls and boys become more agile, adaptive learners. In the Pacific Island countries, UNICEF is prioritizing holistic learning, ensuring children develop with Pacific cultures and values embedded in their education, while promoting a rights-based environment.⁸

PART B: MULTIDIMENSIONAL VULNERABILITY IN THE WORK OF THE UN SYSTEM

Paragraph 13 of Resolution 78/232 Requests the Secretary-General to assess how multidimensional vulnerability is currently considered by the United Nations system. Please indicate how your entity considers multidimensional vulnerability in your policies, practices and Programmes (1000 words)

SIDS have the highest levels of structural vulnerability and a notable lack of resilience compared to all other country groups. Children, particularly girls, indigenous children, children with disabilities and other groups of children exposed to intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality, are among the most vulnerable and marginalized in SIDS.⁹

UNICEF country offices in all regions of the world, and in most countries, now focus on measuring multidimensional child poverty, i.e. how children are deprived of their basic needs in health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and shelter. The analysis is used to advocate for policies to address these multiple deprivations, and commonly these policies point to the need

⁶ UNICEF SIDS Position Paper, 2024

<https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/media/4481/file/UNICEF%20Position%20Paper%20for%20SIDS4%20FINAL.pdf.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

for integrated programming alongside increased social protection coverage – not only to address child deprivations, but also to protect households vulnerable to falling into poverty.

Using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), UNICEF is urging governments to prioritize child poverty reduction in national budgets, policies, and laws. UNICEF is also working on expanding child-sensitive social protection, improving access to quality public services, promoting a decent work and inclusive growth agenda, and reaching families and children in poverty.

Increasingly, UNICEF is focusing on climate risks and child poverty – including mapping vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivations to inform policies and programmes.¹⁰ In Comoros, for example, UNICEF has supported the Government in carrying out an analysis of child poverty, considering monetary and multidimensional poverty, as well as the interlinkages with climate. Similarly, UNICEF Timor-Leste is working on a new initiative to create a sub-national Child Climate Risk Index. This index will help estimate the number of children who are at high risk due to exposure and vulnerability to climate and environmental hazards, shocks, and stresses. The data collected from this index will be used to advocate with the Government for policies and guidelines, including community-based capacity building and provides critical insights to help UNICEF fine-tune its programming.

UNICEF in São Tomé and Príncipe adopts a comprehensive approach that integrates vulnerability considerations across all sectors, ensuring impactful and inclusive efforts. This strategy allows programs to address immediate needs while contributing to long-term resilience through systemic change. By empowering communities to effectively manage and mitigate their vulnerabilities, UNICEF's approach fosters sustainable development and strengthens community resilience. Inclusion efforts will be further enhanced through the National Strategy for Social Protection and the expanded Parental Education Programme, which aims to improve support for vulnerable families, including those with children with disabilities.

In Papua New Guinea, UNICEF programmes aim to strengthen the resilience and reduce the risks of children and families to disasters and crises. This involves a comprehensive risk analysis, covering a range of critical issues affecting children and the wider population in sectors such as WASH, education, health, nutrition, and child protection. The WASH sector, through efforts to apply Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approaches to sector planning, aims to address needs, and reduce risks and vulnerabilities in an equitable manner, while preventing crises and conflicts. Conflict analysis and climate assessments are also included in all WASH Sector national level programme planning.

Financing is also a key focus of these integrated programmes and social protection coverage. Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) can serve as measures or indicators to track change over time, including the impact of an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), once properly implemented or operationalized, on the specific conceptualization of vulnerability.

¹⁰ Read more in report [here](#)

This is particularly important in the context of fiscal constraints and challenges in accessing donor finance, including climate financing.

Limitations of MVI

Currently, measurement on the status of children, such as multidimensional child poverty, is at the level of household and individual child. This allows us to evaluate and identify the most vulnerable and marginalized children and their caregivers within a country. The MVI, on the other hand, is a country-level index constructed from national level aggregate data. Although the MVI is useful for cross-country comparisons, it is limited in that it has the same value for all the households, including all children in a country, therefore it does not contribute in terms of identifying the most vulnerable children within a country.

There is, however, scope to incorporate some of the 18 indicators used in the MVI (such as shares of the population living in low-elevated coast zones) in UNICEF's monitoring indicators and risk and vulnerability assessments, subject to the specific country context where this may be relevant. However, the feasibility needs to be further studied, noting national level aggregate data is used for the MVI and the availability of such data at a disaggregated household level may be limited. In cases where the data is available, it can be technically difficult to cross tabulate with existing indicators, such as those from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS).